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ABSTRACT

This paper is concerned with the ordering of occupational values for students of different social classes who attend schools with considerable social class distributions. The attempt was to add information about occupational values by providing data about the values held by secondary school age students of 2 school districts, each of which had the same social classes (with the exception of the upper class) but differed significantly in the proportion belonging to the same class. Findings include that in school A, the relatively well to do area, (1) all 6 social classes ranked interesting work as being most important, (2) 4 of the 6 classes ranked security 2nd; the other 2 ranked it 3rd, and (3) independence, benefits, and prestige were ranked as relatively unimportant values. In school B, similar results were evident: (1) 4 of the 5 social classes ranked interesting work first and salary 2nd; the lowest social class reversed the ordering of these 2 values; and (2) the value placed upon independence, prestige, and benefits was consistently low. (TA)

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Occupational Values, Social Classes and School Communities

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Anyone attempting to understand the adolescent problem of selecting a career has been faced with the relative values which relate to work. Although this has proven to be a researchable construct, little information has been provided regarding the ordering of occupational values for students of different social classes attending schools varying considerably as to social class distributions. The occupational values of students (of different social classes from schools differing in mode social class) could constitute an essential and important element in the understanding of the motivational structure of students. If professional educators want to perform a significant service in assisting youths to reach a decision, however tentative, regarding a choice of careers, it is important that additional insight be gained about the occupational values construct.

Among the studies in which the construct of occupational values was included, the following are representative of the importance and versatility of this concept. Ginzberg et al (1951) provided important data regarding the time at which values concerned with occupations are formed. Centers (1949) found social class differences in occupational values, while Singer and Stefflre (1954) found differences in the values regarding work held by adolescents and adult males. Dipboye and Anderson (1959) studied the ordering of occupational values of high school students, while Cohen and Rusalem (1964) studied the occupational values of retarded students. Gribbons and Lohnes (1965) studied shifts in the vocational values of adolescents. Thompson (1966) investigated the occupational values of high school students. Perrone (1967) studied the stability of values of junior high school pupils and their parents over a two year period of time.

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The present study was an attempt to add information about occupational values by providing data about the values held by students of two school districts, each of which had the same social classes (with the exception of the upper class) but differed significantly in the proportion belonging to the same class.

Population and Procedures

The study population consisted of 634 secondary school age students (beginning ninth grade) attending two large suburban school districts in Central New York. The two school systems which were selected had a similar range of social classes but differed considerably as to distribution of the number and percent classified as belonging to each of the social classes. School A was located in a relatively "well to do" area. Most of the fathers were employed in the professional, semi-professional and managerial occupations. The majority of the houses were of the better than $28,000 class. However, a small segment of the school population lived in dilapidated or semi-dilapidated houses or in transient trailer camps, or houses much too small for the number of members in the family. School B had a very different distribution according to the social class construct. In this school, there were no members of the ninth grade living in the upper (Class 1) social class. Of the social classes of the study, the majority of School B were classified as belonging to Classes 4 and 5; in School A, the largest class was Number 2. Two hundred and ninety-eight subjects of the study came from School A, and three hundred and thirty six came from School B. The distributions by School and by social class are reported in Table I.

Table I

Social Class Distribution by Schools

Social Class	School A	School B
1	17	--
2	142	27
3	58	41
4	33	109
5	26	107
6	22	52

This pair of populations was administered an occupational values scale adapted from Centers (1949) which consisted of the ranking of nine occupational values by each student. The nine occupational values were: security, prestige, salary, interesting work, advancement, working conditions, relations with others, independence, and benefits. Each value was labeled and briefly described.

Determination of Social Class

The method selected for determining social class was the three factor formula developed by Hollingshead (1958). This formula is a weighted combination of values assigned to (a) occupation, (b) area of residence, and (c) education. An attempt was made to include a fourth factor which was viewed as being potentially significant, source of income, but this had to be abandoned due to the reluctance of school authorities to permit the acquisition of these descriptive data. Cooperation of school authorities was excellent and thus the desire to include the fourth factor was not pressed. The assignment of area of residence weights was facilitated by a

map drawn by the operator of a well known surveying concern.

In the formula utilized to determine the social class of each participating student, occupation received a weight of 9, area of residence 6, and education 5. Class 1 consisted of all who had a total of 30 or less weighted points. The other classes had the following ranges:

Class 2	31 - 53
Class 3	54-73
Class 4	74 - 92
Class 5	93 - 108
Class 6	109 - and over

The recommendations and suggestions of Hollingshead (1958) were followed in the establishment of these cutting points.

Analysis of Results

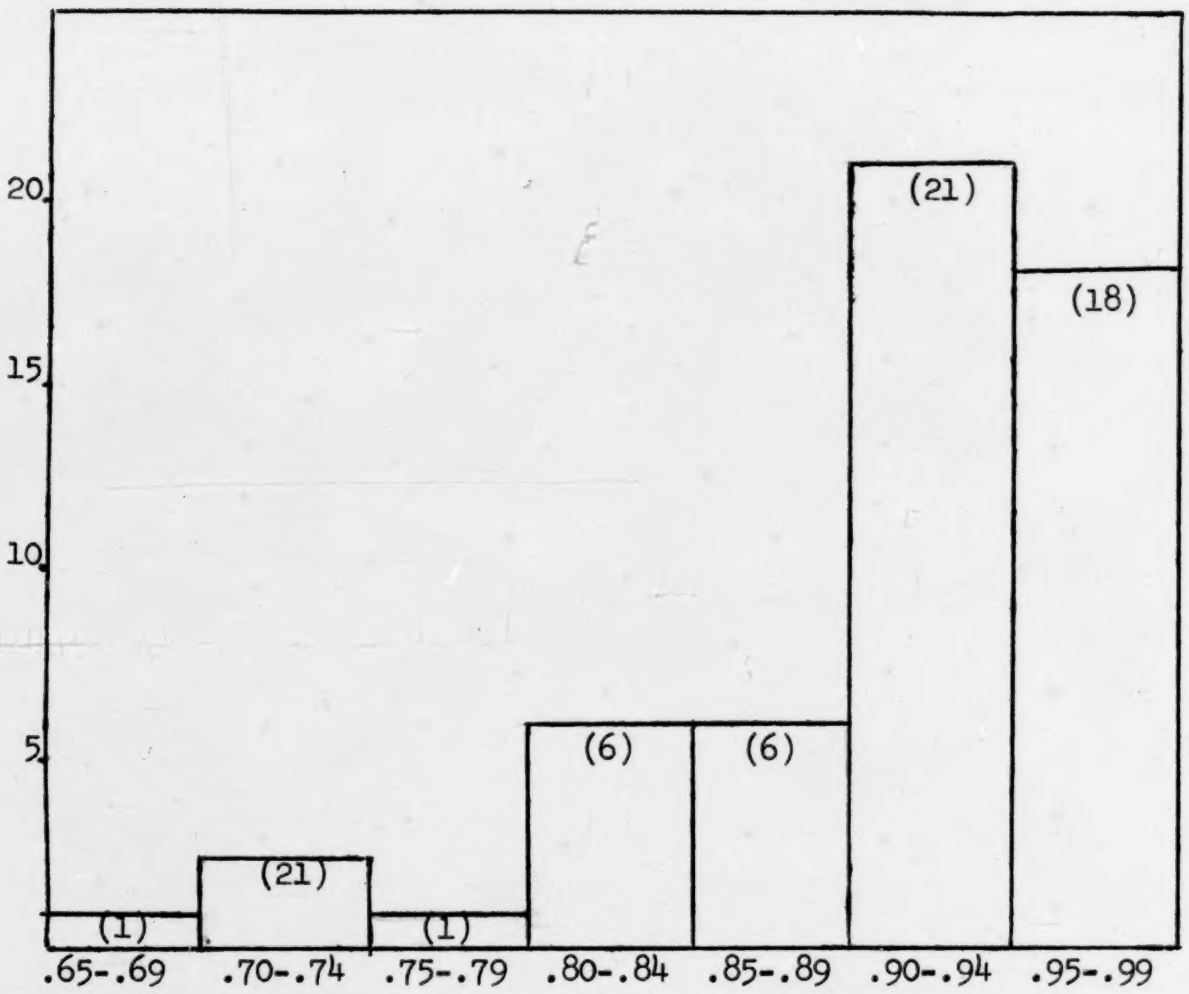
By Social Classes and by Schools Differing in Mean Social Class

The ranks given to the nine values, plus means and standard deviations, for all eleven social class segments are found in Table 2. (Note. Due to the procedures employed, the lower the mean, the higher the ranking of the value). Probably the most significant finding is the similarity of the patterns of the ranks. Of the 55 rho's, each social class compared to all others on the nine values (Graph 1), 39 were of the magnitude of .90 or higher. The range was from .65 (Classes I and IV of School A) to .98 Class IV of both schools). Even in Class I, where the rankings differed the most from those of all other classes, the rho's ranged from .65 to .83. When the responses of the pupils from the same social class but attending schools differing in mean and mode social class were compared, once again, the overall similarity was the major finding. The mean rankings of Class II correlated (rho) .92; for Class III, the rho was .91; for Class IV,.98, for Class V, the mean ranks correlated .90 and for Class VI, the correlation was .89.

In School A, the relatively well to do area, all six social classes ranked interesting work as being the most important. Four of the six social classes ranked security second and the other two ranked it third. Independence, benefits, and prestige were ranked by all six social classes as being relatively unimportant values. In School B, four of the five social classes ranked interesting work first and salary second. The lowest social class of this school reversed the ordering of these two values. Once again, the value placed upon independence, prestige, and benefits was consistently low.

Conclusions

Neither the social class of the students nor the social class descriptions of the schools seemed to be an important determiner of differences in occupational values. The 11 X 10 cell intercorrelational matrix (rho's) showed a range of .65 to .98. The overall ranks of students belonging to the same social class but coming from schools differing significantly in the distribution of social classes was from .89 to .98. Even the uppermost social class, and unfortunately this was found in only one of the two schools, had a range of .65 to .83. The interpretation of these data is that consistency of occupational values is the general rule and that social class and social class make-up of the school are relatively non differentiating variables. Possibly a different list of values along with a modification of the system of responding, might result in social class differences.



MAGNITUDE OF rho's

(Each of the eleven social classes compared to all others on the nine occupational values)

Graph 1

Table II

Occupational Values by Social Class and Schools

School A

Social Class		Values									
		Sec.	Pres.	Sal.	I.W.	Adv.	W.C.	Rw/o	Ind.	Ben.	N
I	Mean	5.00	6.35	4.35	2.06	5.82	4.06	4.59	5.00	7.76	17
	S.D.	2.51	2.06	2.09	1.75	2.79	1.78	2.09	2.62	1.35	
	Rank	5½	8	3	1	7	2	4	5½	9	
II	Mean	4.51	6.33	3.68	2.18	5.18	4.82	4.80	6.49	6.86	142
	S.D.	2.40	2.49	1.87	1.84	2.08	2.22	2.27	2.49	1.77	
	Rank	3	7	2	1	6	5	4	8	9	
III	Mean	4.28	6.19	3.60	2.66	5.38	4.34	5.07	6.86	6.57	58
	S.D.	2.39	2.64	1.73	2.14	2.34	1.77	2.51	2.47	1.83	
	Rank	3	7	2	1	6	4	5	9	8	
IV	Mean	3.85	6.55	3.58	2.48	4.48	4.88	5.15	7.67	6.24	33
	S.D.	2.29	2.22	2.06	2.27	2.11	2.02	2.12	2.04	1.70	
	Rank	3	8	2	1	4	5	6	9	7	
V	Mean	3.15	6.35	4.38	3.08	4.96	4.96	4.81	6.96	6.31	26
	S.D.	2.01	2.30	2.35	2.51	2.66	1.95	2.00	2.07	2.09	
	Rank	2	8	3	1	5½	5½	4	9	7	
VI	Mean	4.86	5.77	3.73	3.41	5.27	4.50	4.77	7.23	5.36	22
	S.D.	2.98	2.16	2.21	2.56	2.47	1.79	2.33	2.22	2.85	
	Rank	5	8	2	1	6	3	4	9	7	

Key

Sec. Security
Pres. Prestige
Sal. Salary
I.W. Interesting work
Adv. Advancement
W.C. Working conditions
Rw/o Relations with others
Ind. Independence
Ben. Benefits

Table II

Occupational Values by Social Class and by Schools

School B

Social Class		Values									
		Sec.	Pres.	Sal.	I.W.	Adv.	W.C.	Rw/o	Ind.	Ben.	N
I	Mean S.D. Rank	N. of Zero in this class for this school									
II	Mean	3.48	6.78	3.52	2.11	5.78	4.33	5.52	6.52	6.33	27
	S.D.	2.36	1.99	2.12	1.45	2.29	1.66	2.56	2.17	2.13	
	Rank	3	9	2	1	6	4	5	8	7	
III	Mean	4.46	6.78	3.44	3.12	5.15	4.39	5.15	6.73	5.95	41
	S.D.	3.03	2.32	1.95	2.41	1.92	2.05	2.24	2.38	2.22	
	Rank	4	9	2	1	5½	3	5½	8	7	
IV	Mean	4.01	6.23	3.22	2.95	5.28	4.75	5.39	7.00	6.12	109
	S.D.	2.55	2.52	1.87	2.33	2.19	2.06	2.24	2.16	2.15	
	Rank	3	8	2	1	5	4	6	9	7	
V	Mean	4.64	6.22	3.35	3.19	5.74	4.24	5.07	6.49	5.97	107
	S.D.	2.56	2.50	2.11	2.40	2.22	2.27	2.34	2.28	2.20	
	Rank	4	8	2	1	6	3	5	9	7	
VI	Mean	3.58	6.25	3.23	3.52	5.98	4.61	5.31	6.25	6.11	52
	S.D.	2.52	2.34	2.56	2.14	2.13	1.89	2.51	2.22	2.25	
	Rank	3	8½	1	2	6	4	5	8½	7	

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